

R E M A R K S

Careful review and examination of the subject application are noted and appreciated. Applicant's representative thanks Examiner Chang for the indication of allowed and allowable subject matter.

SUPPORT FOR CLAIM AMENDMENTS

The claims have been amended for consistency. No new matter has been introduced.

CLAIM REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103

The rejection of claims 1, 2, 17 and 33-37 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Sahlman et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,693,902; hereinafter Sahlman) in view of Aaron et al. U.S. Pat. No. 5,331,632; hereinafter Aaron) and Roy et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,646,983; hereinafter Roy) is respectfully traversed and should be withdrawn.

Roy is not available as prior art. In particular, the earliest priority date to which Roy is entitled is the filing date, November 21, 2000. The present application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/237,086 filed September 28, 2000 and U.S. provisional Application No. 60/195,998 filed April 11, 2000 (see paragraph no. 0001 of the specification). The provisional applications provide evidence that the presently claimed invention was completed prior to November 21, 2000. Since

the invention date of the presently claimed invention precedes the filing date of Roy, Roy is not available as prior art.

An Applicant may overcome a 35 U.S.C. §103 rejection based on a combination of references by showing completion of the invention by the Applicant prior to the effective date of any of the references (MPEP §715.02). The provisional applications provide evidence that the presently claimed invention was completed prior to the filing date, November 21, 2000, of Roy. Therefore, Roy is not available as prior art. As such, the combination of Sahlman, in view of Aaron and Roy is not proper and the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) should be withdrawn.

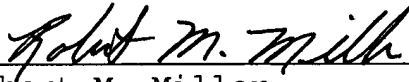
Accordingly, the present application is in condition for allowance. Early and favorable action by the Examiner is respectfully solicited.

The Examiner is respectfully invited to call the Applicants' representative at 586-498-0670 should it be deemed beneficial to further advance prosecution of the application.

If any additional fees are due, please charge Deposit
Account No. 12-2252.

Respectfully submitted,

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